

REMARKS

This application is the US National Phase under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of International Application No. PCT/EP00/09565. Applicant provided with his first submission under § 371 a Preliminary Amendment of the application, receipt of which was acknowledged by the Office. By this instant amendment, claims 1-21 have been canceled and claims 22-47 are added.

Amendments to the specification are of form. No new matter has been added. The specification was also amended by the afore-mentioned Preliminary Amendment.

The Office action objected to the Abstract. Applicant submits the Abstract as amended in the afore-mentioned Preliminary Amendment is fully in compliance with the rules. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore requested.

The Office action objected to claims 6-8, 11-12, 14, 16-17 and 19-20 for various informalities. Claims 1-21 have been canceled, rendering the objection moot. New claims 22-47 do not suffer similar informalities.

Claims 1-21 were alleged to not meet the requirements of patentability; namely, it is alleged that these claims are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by US 2,676,509 to Graham ("Graham"). As claim 1-21 have been canceled in favor of new claims 22-47, this rejection is moot. Nonetheless, the applicant can establish that new claims 22-47 do meet the requirements for patentability and provide the following comments in that regard.

Graham describes a structure for connecting two identical connection elements (nut sections 13) to be plugged together laterally and to be engaged with the thread of the threaded pin. An enlarged bore or passage 20 is provided to allow the nut sections to be slid along the threaded shank. Graham does not teach or suggest a lateral offset of the connection part for the purpose of insertion of a threaded pin into a widened portion 20, as is claimed. If

the claimed structure were adapted to the connection parts taught by Graham, the connection parts would fall apart after assembly. Thus, the modification of Graham, if there was any suggestion to make such a modification, which the applicant submits there is not, would not be successful. Furthermore, the two connection parts of Graham cannot be screwed together against one another to serve as a joint stop since the threaded pin does not have a thread at its foot region and therefore cannot be screwed as deeply into the threaded bore as to create a joint stop. Moreover, the connection taught by Graham does not achieve the effective support of the two connection parts provided by the cooperation of the shoulder surfaces and respective stop faces. The arrangement of the shoulder surfaces and the stop faces effectively avoids tilting of the threaded pin into the hole widening.

The applicant also points the examiner to the Preliminary Examination Report of the PCT wherein the patentability of at least independent claim 8 was confirmed over the Graham reference.

For at least the foregoing reasons applicants submit claims 22-47 are allowable, and such action is solicited. The examiner is encouraged to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this response or the application as a whole. If there are any additional fees or refunds required, the Commissioner is directed to charge or debit Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

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Respectfully submitted,

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